

THE CONDOR

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Ornithology



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THE CONDOR

A Magazine of Western Ornithology

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NESTING OF THE CLARK NUTCRACKER IN CALIFORNIA

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

By JAMES B. DIXON

While the Clark Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) is a common and well known bird in a great many parts of California, there seems to be but little known as yet about the nesting habits of this bird. In searching for records of nesting in California the only one found was a reference in the minutes of the Southern Division of the Cooper Club to two nests collected by O. W. Howard in the San Bernardino Mountains in late March.

For each of the past five summers, the writer has spent a few weeks in the eastern part of California in the Mono basin and has found nutcrackers very common throughout that area. They were particularly in evidence during late May and early June in family groups and were most common at elevations of 8500 to 10,500 feet above sea-level.

The only evidences of nesting found prior to 1934 were the assemblages of birds that, in May and June, acted like family groups, and some old unidentified nests found in scrubby bushes on Reverse Peak, which at the time they were found were occupied by chipmunks. I am sure from present knowledge that these were old nutcracker nests which had been taken over and used by the chipmunks after the nutcrackers were through with them.

In April, 1934, I decided to investigate the situation and to endeavor to locate some occupied nests of the nutcracker in this vicinity. I was aided in the field by Ed Harrison, J. Y. Marquette, James Hanson and Ralph Dixon. Arriving at June Lake in Mono County on April 8, 1934, we found the snow fall far below normal and June weather prevailing. On the morning of April 9, 1934, while looking through binoculars at the snow on the peaks surrounding camp, a bird flew into the field of vision. Because of its extremely rapid upward flight, it aroused my curiosity; and following it, I identified it as a Clark Nutcracker. This bird rose almost perpendicularly 400 feet above the valley floor and, leveling off in its flight, landed on the mountain side directly above where I was standing. I watched the tree into which it flew for some time and the bird did not appear again in the vicinity. This observation occurred at 6 a. m. At about 8 a. m., Marquette and I decided to investigate this suspicious action of the nutcracker observed earlier in the day, and accordingly, we climbed the mountain side to the location. After looking around quietly we located a Clark Nutcracker sitting silently on the dead top of a blasted pine tree near-by. Although this bird could see us and without a doubt was aware of our presence, it neither gave

indication of alarm nor paid the least attention to us or our movements. We looked around in the pines and other thick growing trees and could see nothing that indicated a nest; we decided to watch the bird for further developments. The bird acted like a brooding bird and after sitting in the same position for several minutes abruptly dropped down to a perch within a few feet of us. After casually looking us over, it gave a two-syllabled call that caused its mate fairly to explode from a nest in a small scrubby juniper tree near-by. The bird we had been watching then flew directly to the tree from which its mate came and disappeared quietly in the thick foliage. Upon going over to the tree, we found the nest at the end of a slender limb surrounded by heavy branches and the bird was sitting upon it.



Fig. 40. June and Gull lakes, Mono County, California, in late March, showing nesting grounds of Clark Nutcracker.

Fraser's Photo, Pomona, California

The nest was fourteen feet from the ground and on very steep ground which made it seem closer to the ground than it really was. It was made entirely of parts of the juniper tree. The outside portion of the nest was composed of the dead weather-beaten twigs of the juniper tree and was 12 inches across outside, with a maximum depth of $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The inside of the nest was padded with the reddish-colored outer bark of the juniper and was $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches across and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth. The lining was $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick and extremely well padded to keep out the cold from below. The outside structure was extremely well wedged into the supporting limbs of the tree and would not easily shake out by movement of the main supporting limb. When found, this nest contained three young birds which we judged to be ten days out of the shell (fig. 44). The parent birds were quite fearless, allowing us to touch them. At times they would have to be lifted off the nest so that we could look at the young birds. The sitting bird would lean sideways when approached and open its bill, acting as though it would peck if disturbed, but neither of the birds ever actually pecked us, although with their sharp, long bills they could have put up a severe resistance (fig. 41). The weather was mild for this time of the year, but both birds

were faithful in their brooding of the young as well as in their feeding of them. This being the first nest located and being easy of access, we accepted it as typical, and it was from this pair of birds that we secured most of our detailed information as regards food, method of feeding, brooding periods and general behavior around the nest.



Fig. 41. Clark Nutcracker incubating.

Photograph taken by Ed Harrison.

In the event one of the parent birds left the nest from any cause, the other bird of the pair would immediately assume brooding duties. This was done without any effort to force such brooding duties upon the mate, as is so often the case with other birds. Insofar as we observed, the duties of brooding and feeding the young were equally borne by the two parents. From casual observation we could not tell which was the male and which the female of the pair. Actual time records taken on the afternoon of the 9th of April, which was a warm sunshiny afternoon, revealed a change of brooding and feeding duties every thirty minutes on the average.

The food at this time was partly predigested and was broken up and fed impartially to all the young. A large share of the food was secured from the half frozen meadow land on the floor of the valley some 400 feet lower in elevation and at least one-half mile distant in an air line. The food consisted partly of wood-borers secured from rotten logs lying on the ground. These borers seemed to be located by the sense of hearing, as the birds would cock their heads to one side and listen and then go to a rotting log and start digging, invariably securing something which they took away with them as food. They also caught flying ants and other "bugs" in mid-air, in much the same manner as do flycatchers and woodpeckers; after crushing them, the parents fed them to the young birds. The chief source of food at this time was the soft oozy ground in the meadows that were just coming out from under the snow. Apparently they were securing some form of larva that was found

on the hummocks sticking up from the oozy ground. I watched the birds with 8× binoculars as close as one hundred feet, but could not be certain of the identity of the food.

Early in the mornings the birds would be plentiful in the meadows, whence they flew long distances to their nest locations. Some were watched through binoculars for a mile and one-half and were still traveling toward the nesting location, so I am sure the birds travel some distance to reach suitable feeding grounds. We did not see the birds working the trees for pine nuts at any time. One thing we noticed that seemed odd was the habit the birds had of eating snow. They seemed to prefer this method of securing moisture to finding a place where they could drink from a running stream. This snow eating habit was noticed in several places, but was most noticeable around the nests.



Fig. 42. Nest of Clark Nutcracker removed from nest tree.

Photograph taken by James B. Dixon.

Apparently the female does most of the incubating of the eggs, for we noticed in two instances that the sitting bird was fed upon the nest, but no such feeding took place where there were young in the nest. Five occupied nests were located on April 9 and 10, 1934. Three of these held young birds at this date; the first held three young estimated at ten days out of the shell; the second held four young two days out of the shell and the third held three young which were at least fourteen days out of the shell. The other two nests held eggs. The first one held four eggs in which the incubation in all the eggs was one-half advanced; the second nest held three eggs in which the incubation was two-thirds advanced.

All of the nests were in juniper trees on steep slopes at the 8000-foot level and contrary to our expectations were located in the coldest spots, where the snow stayed

on the ground the longest. It is quite likely that these locations are the freest from the wind which blows so hard at these elevations, and I feel certain the juniper trees are used because of their sturdy build and ability to withstand the wind action. All nest locations seemed to have been selected with protection from the wind in mind, as the nests were either on top of a large limb, or, if supported by a small branch, were surrounded by heavy limbs that gave protection. The only variation in the nest construction seemed to be in a landing platform of sticks which some nest builders provided and others dispensed with. This platform was of juniper twigs the same as the nest and rested upon the same limb which supported the nest. This feature is illustrated in figure 42.



Fig. 43. Nest and four eggs of Nutcracker, showing details of construction.

Photograph taken by James B. Dixon.

Three eggs seemed to be the common number, and the two sets showed very little variation as to size and markings but were different in shape. The set of four eggs measures in inches as follows: .95x1.15; .91x1.22; .92x1.25; .92x1.18. The nests were located from ten to eighteen feet from the ground and were well concealed from below.

The action of the birds during the breeding period seemed truly to indicate their crow, jay, and magpie relationships. The birds were very much in evidence if one looked closely enough, but were sly and quiet and were attending strictly to the business at hand in an efficient manner. This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that I had asked a number of people who had lived here all their lives, both winter and summer, if they had ever seen a nest of the pine crow, as it is known here. No one had ever seen or heard of a nest, although the birds were nesting commonly close by and in places where one would have thought they would be noticed.

The young birds conduct themselves in the normal crow manner, by trying

to swallow anything that is thrust at them. They open up their mouths upon the slightest provocation, such as a shadow passing over them, a loud noise, or a movement of the tree or nest limb.

The young are well cared for and grow rapidly. The young had left all of the nests noted above by the first day of May and were being fed in the near-by trees for some time thereafter, apparently ascending slowly to higher levels by late May and early June.



Fig. 44. Young Nutcrackers ten days old.

Photograph taken by Ed Harrison.

The Prairie Falcon seems to be the nutcracker's major enemy. A pair of these falcons had a nest on a cliff in the center of the nesting area and during May and June were always trying to catch the young nutcrackers. Although I saw several unsuccessful attempts made by the falcons, I did not see a nutcracker caught; but from the actions of the falcons on numerous occasions I am sure they do catch them sometimes. A pair of Western Goshawks and a pair of Cooper Hawks had nests not far from the area occupied by the nutcrackers, but we never found any feathers around either nest that would indicate that the nutcrackers formed any part of their food supply. Nevertheless, these hawks undoubtedly would rate as formidable enemies of the nutcracker.

The most outstanding thing in our observations was the utter fearlessness displayed by the bird at this season. This attitude seemed to be one of contempt for human association; this seems to hold good at all times, for the nutcrackers do not flock to the back doors for food as do the other birds during exceedingly cold spells of weather during the winter. They have apparently learned to eat snow because at times in the winter everything is frozen up and open water is hard to find.

Escondido, California, August 22, 1934.

NOTES ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE
LONG-TAILED YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT

By ERIC CAMPBELL KINSEY

In middle June of this year a trip was made to the town of Snelling, in Merced County, California, for the purpose of collecting living specimens of the Long-tailed Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens longicauda*). These living specimens were desired in pursuance of the study of the evanescence of color in birds having yellow and red predominant in their plumages. The particular study system followed contemplates the holding of such specimens in aviaries over the period of one or more molts, after which they are to be banded and released during one of the ensuing migration periods. Subsequent attempts at recapture, for comparative purposes, are to be made in successive seasons.

The immediate scene of operations at Snelling was the river bottom south and west of the town, representing an area roughly two miles long and a half mile wide made up of the usual riparian associations which are so attractive to the species desired. While engaged in our trapping operations, several definite peculiarities were noted which may be of interest to others, hence the following notes.

The usual territorial rights, enforced by breeding birds generally, so far as their own species is concerned, obtained markedly with the chats. Each breeding pair appeared to stay strictly within its own territory except when there was a general alarm emanating from a particular territory (such as that occasioned by pilfering jays or hawks), when a number of chats would congregate at that spot to aid in driving away the would-be despoilers.

Each chat followed a very definite schedule each day. For example, a certain male would appear at dawn on a particular dead branch some fifty feet up in a cottonwood tree and, after a short song, would then fly down to a definite spot in an adjacent flooded meadow, whereupon satisfying his appetite he would return to the original perch. After remaining there for several minutes, singing, he would repair to a particular branch in the middle of a near-by elderberry bush, drop from there to a certain nettle stalk, cross to the nest where his mate was brooding eggs, and after (presumably) feeding her would again return to the dead branch in the cottonwood. Then he would fly to the irrigation ditch for his early morning plunge, return again to the cottonwood branch, preen and complete his toilet; then down into the meadow for more insects, back to the original cottonwood, again to the elderberry patch, down to the nest, etc. This routine was followed out with little variation throughout the morning. Immediately after mid-day he would descend from the cottonwood to another patch of elderberries on the opposite side and to an adjacent dry meadow where grasshoppers were quite plentiful; then would again return to the cottonwood, from there drop down to the nest, and, after being satisfied that all was as it should be, would once again return to the cottonwood. The same procedure would be followed all during the afternoon, broken only by a bath in the irrigation ditch just before dusk. The nest was situated due east of the cottonwood and it was the eastern part of the territory, upon which the sun shone, that he foraged in the morning. In the afternoon the sun was on the west of the cottonwood and it was the western section of the territory that then received his attention.

This species is apparently as casual as are hummingbirds, so far as their mates are concerned. Again, to illustrate, a certain female was trapped late one afternoon whereupon her mate appeared next forenoon with a new female and, on the succeeding day, this pair started constructing a new nest near the site of the old one. On

the following day the male was trapped and on the next day what we assumed was the remaining female appeared with a new male and afforded every evidence of mating. This particular pair was located at one of the extreme ends of the territory covered. Another pair was under observation at the other end of the territory, where the male was first trapped; two days later the female appeared with a new male whereupon she was trapped and, on the following day, the same male appeared with a new female. It might be mentioned at this point that the males were at all times definitely identified due to the specific territory they dominated, also due to the exact schedule which each followed every day. Individual female identification (with one exception) was more difficult and we could only assume that, after trapping the first male, the female who reappeared the following day was the mate of the collected male. The exception mentioned was a female which had a broken wing quill, which stood up at such an angle as to afford easy and positive identification.

Further, in attempting to trap the mates of birds already taken, it was found impossible to use the collected specimens as decoys in the trap. In other words, neither the male or female mate of a captive specimen would enter a trap in which that specimen was held. On the other hand, a male decoy would invariably trap another male, merely by our placing the trap in the definite territory of the bird wanted. Similarly, a female decoy would capture another female by placing the trap with the decoy near the presumed nesting location of the female wanted.

In the case of the first pair mentioned above the male appeared with a new female on the succeeding day after his original mate had been trapped, and immediately started nesting operations within a few feet of the old nest, notwithstanding the fact that his old mate was anxiously calling to him from a trap placed along side the old nesting location. He appeared to be blithely indifferent to her presence in the immediate neighborhood and entirely heedless of her present difficulty (confinement) and possible fate. This, in marked contrast to certain other species of the order Passeriformes, as for example, the Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*), the Green-backed Arkansas Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria hesperophilus*) and the Brown Towhees (*Pipilo fuscus petulans* and *P.f. carolae*), all of which are devoted mates and parents.

A female chat was flushed from a Sacramento Spotted Towhee's (*Pipilo maculatus falcinellus*) nest which contained one partly incubated egg of the towhee and four similarly incubated eggs of the chat. This female chat was unfortunately killed by the trap in which we were subsequently trying to take her. On the same afternoon, after one of the chat's eggs and the single towhee's egg had been taken from the nest and opened to ascertain the state of incubation, a female towhee was found brooding the remaining three chat eggs. Once in the afternoon, while observing this unusual state of affairs, the male chat, mate of the trap-killed female, flew down near the nest and drove the female towhee away. He would not, however, go within two feet of the nest, probably due to the fact that we had had to cut away not an inconsiderable amount of the blackberry vines in which it was placed, in order that we might carry on observations from a distance with field glasses. The following morning the towhee was again brooding the eggs and continued to do so until late afternoon when the male chat again started his characteristic "dropping song" for the benefit of a new female which, at that time, made her first appearance on the scene. A short time later he and this new mate were investigating the covert in which the towhee's nest was located and again the towhee was driven from the nest. However, upon our leaving Snelling two days later this pair of chats was busily

constructing a new nest at quite some distance from the old towhee's nest and the towhee was still brooding the chat eggs. It was our intention to return to Snelling a fortnight later to ascertain whether or not the towhee was successful in her maternal duties; unfortunately we were not privileged to make the trip.

At about 6 o'clock on the morning of August 15, 1934, while making the rounds of traps located on the grounds of my home at Manor, Marin County, California, I heard the characteristic click of one side of a catapult trap and, glancing over at it (a distance of some twenty feet), I thought we had obtained, for banding, our first thrush of the season. From the distance I judged it to be a Russet-backed Thrush, so completed the task I was then engaged in, that of releasing and banding two Lutescent Orange-crowned Warblers (*Vermivora celata lutescens*) from a near-by water trap. I then walked over to the catapult and was greatly and agreeably surprised to discover that the "thrush" was in reality a Long-tailed Chat, an immature of the year.

This, so far as we can learn, is the first fall record for Marin County, of this species. It has been listed as only occurring in the county as a "rare spring visitant" and this would appear to be quite correct inasmuch as an intensive three-year search, made up of many field trips during the spring months, has failed to locate it, nor have we ever heard one note of its characteristic song in that time.

The probable explanation of our capture of this particular specimen lies first in the fact that it is an immature and evidently had strayed from the species' usual channels of migration. And second, that it was undoubtedly attracted to the trap by the living specimens brought back from Snelling which are held in an aviary situated approximately twenty-five feet from the catapult. The latter was baited with weed seeds, an unusual bait to attract an insectivorous species, except through curiosity. No other chats have been either sighted or heard in the vicinity although a careful watch has been kept for them during the last few days.

Unlike the individuals trapped at Snelling during the breeding season, this particular one evidenced very little fear when handled and is as tractable and steady in confinement, as are now the Snelling examples which have all "cage molted" into fearless, and beautifully plumaged birds.

Manor, California, August 20, 1934.

PERPLEXITIES IN THE MAKING OF A STATE LIST OF BIRDS

By JOSEPH GRINNELL

For quite some time I have made it a pleasurable duty to keep chronicle of the published literature bearing in any way upon the bird-life of California. This activity of mine has resulted in a manuscript bibliography and synonymy which have kept growing ever more rapidly since their beginnings in 1899. They are right now brought down to date, that is, about as nearly down to date as a thing of this sort can be brought—in the nature of the case.

These materials, constituting a kind of bookkeeping system, make it possible at any one time to count up the number of species credited to the state and to examine the status of each in the light of accumulated knowledge. I propose presently to give some of the current figures. But first, there are difficulties that I want to tell about. Just how shall a state or regional list be made up? In undertaking to compile a new, down-to-date distributional list of the birds of California, I am confronted first of all with the problem of just where to fix limits for the inclusion of kinds.

A classification of the groups to be considered in this connection will make the nature of this problem clear. We have, to deal with:

(1) Kinds (that is, species and subspecies) which are known to occur now, naturally and regularly, somewhere within the limits of the State as at the present time politically bounded. [For example, the Western Meadowlark.]

(2) Kinds now extinct within the State but which are definitely known to have occurred naturally and regularly within historical times, exclusively fossil species being thus eliminated. [As an example here, is the Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse.]

(3) Kinds which are known *only* from their *fossil* remains—that is, no individuals of which have lived down into Recent or even into humanly historical times. [For example, the stork of Rancho La Brea.]

(4) Kinds which have occurred naturally and recently but once or twice or three times, so recorded on perfectly valid basis, but which are not regular or not established—those that are often designated as accidentals, casuals or strays. [The Louisiana Water-thrush is an example.]

(5) Kinds that are now established at large, therefore of “regular” occurrence in some portion of the State, but which are not native or of “natural” occurrence, because the original stock was brought in and planted through the agency of man. [For example, the Ring-necked Pheasant.]

(6) Kinds that are non-native and yet not domesticated, those which owe their presence to the agency of man, but which have not become established, only individuals now and then being recorded as at large. Some of these are “escapes,” others the result of purposeful liberation; but all have proven their ability, individually, to survive for a time outside of captivity. [For instance, the European Blackbird.]

(7) Kinds which occur only under domestication—ones which, though not necessarily kept under enclosure, are dependent upon man’s culture of them; individuals, however, may stray away from man’s own immediate precincts and may even breed to a limited extent outside of man’s close supervision. [For example, Guinea-hen.]

(8) Kinds that are known to occur in captivity, usually under the closest sort of human care, but not strictly speaking in a state of domestication; those of which individuals have not, at least as yet, been known to survive at large. [For example, the Whydah-bird.]

Just how, then, shall our State list be made up? Most conservatively, of group (1) alone? Or of groups (1) and (2) only? If so, why not include (3)? If (2) be included with (1), then why not add (5)? Shall (4) be included? If so, then why not (6)? And (7), and then (8)?

Frankly, at the moment of this writing, I am quite undecided just where most properly to draw the line. This uncertainty does not, be it observed, bring in any question of systematics (namely, the subspecies question) or of geography (such as limit on the ocean). The points at issue have to do with the time factor (birds actually existing versus extinct and fossil ones); with the status factor (birds established, regular or breeding, versus casual or accidental ones); and with the human factor (birds introduced, domesticated, captive, escaped). Shall we have a “boiled down” State list, for California, of 400-odd kinds, or a more inclusive list of 600-odd, or an all-inclusive list of upwards of 1000 species and subspecies?

From the strictly biological standpoint it seems perfectly immaterial just how an initial stock of a given bird species gets into a country—whether by its own efforts, whether carried on the air currents of a cyclonic storm, as so well demonstrated by Forbush for the Atlantic coast of North America, or whether brought

across an ocean, caged, by some Chinese sailor. What of the English Sparrow, which is thought to have reached California by "hitch-hiking" along the Union Pacific Railroad from an eastern state into which it had originally been introduced from Europe by some well-intentioned person? Man, *himself*, with all his predilections, is just as "natural" a phenomenon on the Earth as any of the other animals. Why should *his* agency, either incidental or purposeful, in carrying animals about over the Earth's surface be considered exceptional, unnatural, artificial? Therefore, why side-step the results?

No matter how the English Sparrow, or the Ring-necked Pheasant, got to California, it is here; it has established itself, and this inevitably affects the fortunes of a long chain of other living things, including plants both native and cultivated, insects, mammals, and other birds. From this highly important, ecological point of view the presence of every bird, as also the history of its arrival, needs to be recorded along with those of the so-called endemic species. It can be argued here that listing, *separately*, of "introductions" may thwart the ready understanding of what is happening or likely to happen as a result of such transplanting. The listing of introductorial and vagrant occurrences *along with* the endemics, in their proper systematic positions, would make more clear the directions of inter-specific competition that may be set up with native species—the replacement processes that, under way for a period, may lead to the supplanting of some native kind by an alien kind. The latter, from this biological standpoint, cannot safely be ignored; and its presence from the outset, it would seem, should be made known, and kept before the ornithological and ecological public. It is, in this view, quite as important a component of the state list as any other bird.

As to the student of faunistics, can he afford to ignore the existence of *any* species, by whatever means established, within the area he outlines for his study? The complex picture before him must be analyzed in every detail, leaving out no one species or group of species. Very often the general faunist, also the economic zoologist, must depend entirely upon the work of the compilers of authentic lists for his knowledge of what is, and what is not, present in a given territory. It might prove seriously misleading to such a faunist, or economist, if any set of species were omitted, even if this be listed *only* apart, in an appendix.

Then there is the fossil group of kinds, that some bird students would like to be relieved of even *seeing* anywhere in a regional list! The species in this group are, they say, dead and gone, their ancient existence in the region is outside of any considerations with respect to the living fauna. Of course, it can instantly be rejoined that *historically* present, but now extinct, species should on just as good grounds be forgotten. Why include the Sharp-tailed Grouse, once plentiful in the Modoc region but now gone, in the California list (which most compilers would unhesitatingly do), any more than *Teratornis* of the Pleistocene?

The emphatic reply is to be heard, from that group of students who instinctively want to know how things as they are right now came to be, that every known kind of extinct bird that has existed in a given region should be included in an easily accessible chronicle of its avifauna. The argument is respectable, that only through knowledge of all the extinct species, the ancient kinds preserved to us only in fossil form, as well as those from cave deposits and kitchen-middens, and thence down to the kinds but very recently exterminated, can we come anywhere near satisfactorily explaining the associations of species living in the region today.

On the other hand, again, the great numbers of fossil species already come to knowledge from California, imposes a practical difficulty, in that the length of a

state list which includes them thereby reaches great bulk—increase of cost; and not only that, but it may mean to the lay student, who is in greatest number, the obscuring of the things appealing most to him, and thus inconvenience. This question is, therefore, one that is especially difficult of practical answer.

The average aviculturist, I have observed, concerns himself rather concentratedly with his captive birds. His is often a very personal concern for the individual bird, rather than interest in the fortunes of its species; yet now and then one meets a man in this group of people who has, additionally, the introductionist point of view. Indeed, I have known of certain cases wherein a man of this trend turned out onto his estate numbers of foreign kinds, with the expressed idea that they would breed at large and stay around permanently. One or a few of these species, of course, might prove able to do just that. In any event, the inclusion of caged birds in a state list might quite well be justified on the ground that so doing would provide a feature of interest to the aviculturist (of whom there are astonishingly many in California) and thus extend the "circulation" of the list; and not only that but, more to the point in my discussion, there would be provided to the faunal student a record of all the species likely at any time to make their appearance in the wild. We have, undoubtedly from this source, already in California, records of wild-taken Chaffinches, European Blackbirds, Mynahs, etc.

An argument against including the cage-bird group of species is mostly based on tradition—"it hasn't been done"—not so very sound an argument to be sure. But another argument is the practical one that it would quite surely nearly double the bulk of our state list. And the question of cost again enters.

The conservationist may have a special, and well-grounded, view to express on this question. The inclusion in regular standing in a state list, of all species known from importation and bird-store records might encourage liberation of alien species. That is, it might well lead to a more general tolerance and advocacy of bringing in and planting foreign species, game as well as non-game. Thus, I have heard the remark that our California fauna (probably referring only to some limited portion of the state) is *poor*; we ought to bring in more species, "desirable" ones, it is said,—song birds, birds of beauty, game species which are bigger and finer than any of our native kinds.

To the average conservationist, proposals of this sort do not appeal. Many economic ecologists, too, urge that such increments are exceedingly undesirable; all the ecologic niches (biotopes) in the region are already occupied; there is no room for additions, save by the supplanting of native species—which is not desirable on esthetic grounds and might prove dangerous economically. To the class of persons convinced that the preservation of the native fauna is the policy most consistent with widest long-time human interests, the inclusion of the already established alien species in the state list is interpretable as having an advertising effect. Whatever the other arguments held against it, this one, of probably exalting the seeming importance of the introduced species, would, it is feared, make for extension of the practice of introduction—would speed it up instead of soft-pedaling it, as by omitting all reference to non-native kinds.

The inclusion of accidentals, otherwise known as casuals or strays, those birds that are supposed to have gotten into a given region by natural means (that is, with no help from man), has much to be said on the favorable side, but something also on the opposite side. This I have called the status factor.

The records of so-called accidentals are increasing in number right along—even accelerating in rate of increase, doubtless because there are more, and more

alert, observers and collectors on the look-out for the unusual. As shown by a study I have reported upon elsewhere, if each of these new accidental occurrences be entered upon our California state list, at the present rate (1 and 3/5 per year in a 35-year period), in 300 years there would be more of these accidentals on it than species of regular status. Also, since there is no bird on the entire North American list, of some 1400 species and subspecies, that is not just as likely to appear in California sooner or later as some of those which *have* occurred, then in 490 years at this same rate, if the present intensity of search be continued, all the 1400 birds on the North American Check-list will also be on the California state list. And what good purpose would the inclusion of all this preponderant group of accidentals then serve?

One result of such inclusion currently is to stimulate the intensive search, by collectors and observers, for additions to the list—new records. In a degree this is, perhaps, a good thing, when not made a prime object of ornithological effort. It can be condoned, at least, on the ground that the general trend is for additional occurrences of the same species to be discovered, so that eventually some of the originally "accidental" kinds become recognizable as of regular, say transient, appearance, even though more or less rare.

But an objection is that the search for rarities, with resulting recording of them conspicuously in formal standing in a standard list tends to over-emphasize their importance; tends also to obscure the more fundamentally important regular avifaunal constituency.

Yet another angle that should not be overlooked is the essentially human one, of custom and tradition. Should the compiler of a state list heed the concepts of limitation already developed in publications of the sort, and help stabilize them? Or should he bowl over precedent and attempt to introduce new bases of selecting kinds to be included? Innovations sometimes make for real progress; adherence to tradition invites stagnation.

It might be in order further to ask as to the purpose of a state list: is it to inform *all* classes of people interested in birds—working naturalists, biologists, faunal students, sportsmen, esthetes, aviculturists; or is to be restricted to the needs and interests of just one of these classes? Should the primary aim be to satisfy the wants of the largest group of readers with least confusion, or to provide something not possibly at the outset wanted by some, but which will stimulate such persons to new routes of thinking? Many considerations stack up, on reflection, some pointing one way, some the other.

There are other perplexing matters which confront the prospective compiler of a regional list; for example, how to indicate extent of geographical range, and how to treat peripheral records and change of status in historical time; methods and extent of citation; separate listing of certain groups in appendixes, etc. But these things cannot take time for discussion here.

Now for some figures, as based on my present reckoning, and upon a certain restricted inclusion of the groups I have discussed: The number of species and subspecies which have occurred within historical times, naturally (not through human agency), one or more times, and of which at least one authentic specimen is known to be preserved (therefore subject to re-examination), is 608. In a "hypothetical" list, which I have compiled separately from this "regular" list of 608, there are 107 additional entries, involving sight records, species of occurrence doubtfully within our present geographical limits, doubtful identifications, and non-native, but established, species. There are, described to date, 38 exclusively fossil birds.

Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, June 13, 1934.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

A Hummingbird Entangled in a Spider's Web.—In accounts of tropical explorations we read of spiders' webs capable of ensnaring small birds, but one hardly expects to happen upon anything of that sort right at home. Recently encountering an object hanging by two strands of a nearly demolished web, I did not at once recognize its nature, but closer inspection showed it to be a hummingbird, evidently a female or immature male Costa (*Calypte costae*), suspended head downward with folded wings. The bird looked dead, but when taken in hand it opened its bill and struggled feebly, so I undertook to remove the web, which was well wrapped around its wings. The strands were so tough and viscid that this was accomplished only with difficulty and, apparently, at some risk of pulling out the feathers. When released, the bird was too exhausted to fly, so it was placed inside a room. A few minutes later it was found clinging to the window screen, and when taken to the doorway it flew away with fully restored strength.

The web in question was that of our largest common orb weaver, a dull-colored, heavy-bodied, sluggish spider which spins a particularly coarse thread and often spans a space of ten feet or more. Doubtless a hummingbird in full flight would break through the web without harm, but if it should blunder into it while hovering, the beating of its wings might easily wrap about it a large portion of the web; and such is the strength of the fabric that it seems capable of holding a bird of considerably larger size. Evidently the rarity of such occurrences is due to the vigilance of the hummingbirds in avoiding the snares rather than to any lack of potential danger.—ROBERT S. WOODS, *Azusa, California, July 31, 1934.*

Nesting of the Orange-crowned Warbler in Oregon.—During the summer months this rather elusive species is sparingly distributed over some of the higher mountains of eastern Oregon. It can not be called common in this State but summer records of its occurrence have been noted on Hart Mountain in Lake County, the Steins Mountains in Harney County, on Lookout Mountain in Baker County, and in the Wallowa Mountains of northeastern Oregon. I have found these birds in groves of aspen, willow, and alder, in preference to other cover, usually above 5,000 feet altitude. Unless the males are heard singing they can be overlooked easily in any locality. The series in my collection from Oregon is typical of the Rocky Mountain form, *Vermivora celata orestera* Oberholser, but this form is not recognized as a valid race in the A. O. U. Check-list of 1931.

On June 18, 1934, a nest of this species was found at 6,600 feet altitude on Hart Mountain, Lake County, Oregon. The location was a rather dense mixed grove of aspen, alder, willow, and yellow pine. The female was on the nest, which was placed on the ground well under a small leaning willow stump, about five inches in diameter, that had been cut off about a foot above the ground, leaving the stump leaning at an angle of about 45 degrees. Weeds had grown over the stump forming a loose canopy of vegetation which protected the nest and sitting bird from being easily seen. The nest was composed of coarse dry strips of willow bark, lined with porcupine hairs. It measured, inside, 50 mm. in width and 33 mm. in depth. It held four eggs, resembling the eggs of *V. c. lutescens* in markings and color, but distinctly smaller. Incubation was well advanced. On flushing the female, she protested with low chirps, and was soon joined by the male. Both parents were very shy and kept well under cover while I was near the nest.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, July 19, 1934.*

Pelagic Birds near Shore.—My fondness for boating carries me frequently to the ocean near San Diego, but never before have I seen so many pelagic birds close to shore as were recently observed en route to and from the regatta at Santa Monica. On August 3, between San Diego and San Clemente Island, I definitely counted fourteen Black-footed Albatrosses (*Diomedea nigripes*) and there may have been more. Five individuals were counted in one group and three in another, in both cases resting on the water. On August 12, between Catalina and San Clemente islands, I saw petrels in flocks "thick as blackbirds." There were three separate flocks which I estimated as containing from 200 to 500 birds each. They would be seen resting on

the water, would arise and settle on the water in a different place. In addition to the flocks, there were hundreds of scattered individuals, all headed north. I am unable to name the species, as I had no facilities for collecting, but can state that by far the majority of the petrels were all black, probably Socorro Petrels (*Oceanodroma socorroensis*) or Black Petrels (*Oceanodroma melania*) or both. A few of the birds, perhaps not one in a hundred, showed white on the rump, and still fewer seemed to be gray with white on the rump.—J. W. SEFTON, JR., *San Diego Society of Natural History*, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, August 21, 1934.

A Race of *Porzana flaviventer* from Central America.—This tiny rail has long been known from the Guianas, from the larger Antillean islands, and has recently been detected in the Magdalena district of Colombia. It remains one of the rarest of birds in collections and certainly has never been detected before anywhere on the mainland north of Colombia.

On August 19, 1925, at Lake Olomega in eastern El Salvador, one of these rails was shot when it fluttered from under foot as I was working an area of foot-deep water covered with a mat of floating water hyacinth and dotted with clumps of mimosa. Several others were seen from time to time, usually only for brief moments, but it was not until I revisited the lake in April, 1926, that I succeeded in collecting another specimen. Both of the birds taken are males; the one collected on August 19 was evidently breeding, while the spring bird (April 8) was sexually dormant.

These two specimens had never been studied critically until the present time. That they would prove to be a distinct race was almost a foregone conclusion in view of the geographic variations already known and the remoteness of El Salvador from the other areas inhabited by the species. This race, which is named for Dr. Casey A. Wood, may be known as:

Porzana flaviventer woodi, new subspecies.

Type.—Male adult in breeding condition, no. 15513 Dickey collection; Lake Olomega, Department of San Miguel, El Salvador, August 19, 1925; collected by A. J. van Rossem, original number 8583.

Subspecific characters.—Size small as in *Porzana flaviventer hendersoni* Bartsch of Hispaniola and Porto Rico; color nearest to the Antillean races (*hendersoni* and *gossii*), but crown (in males at least) paler, pectoral region whiter, median upper parts browner (less blackish), dorsal white markings narrower and less extensive, and black loreal streak only 1 mm. wide instead of (as in all other races) 2 mm. Measurements of the type are: wing, 60.5 mm.; exposed culmen, 15.8; tarsus, 20.4; middle toe without claw, 27.0.

Range.—Known only from Lake Olomega, El Salvador.

Remarks.—The El Salvador race is certainly closer in color to the Antillean than to the two South American races, *flaviventer* Boddaert and *bangsi* Darlington. South American birds are predominantly black and white dorsally, while the Antillean races are brown and black with rather prominent white streaking. The brown extreme (of *gossii* and *hendersoni*) is close to *woodi* in the reduction of black, but no specimen examined is as narrowly streaked as are the two from El Salvador, in which dorsal white streaking is reduced to thread-like lines.

As regards the color of soft parts, the tarsi and feet of *hendersoni* are, according to a field tag by Dr. W. L. Abbott attached to a specimen (U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 251398) from Haiti, "pale brownish green." The tarsi and feet of *gossii* are recorded on the field tags of several Jamaican specimens taken by J. E. Sherlock as "brown" in six cases and "greenish yellow" in one case. Chubb (*Birds of British Guiana*) records the tarsi and feet of *flaviventer* as "yellowish." The colors of soft parts of the two El Salvador specimens were noted by myself in the field as follows: tarsi and feet pale dull yellow in both; bill blackish olive in one, dark olive in the other; iris dark red in one. It would appear, therefore, that the colors of soft parts in this species may be of subspecific value. Because of the apparent agreement in the color of the feet and legs of *flaviventer* and *woodi*, it is not at all certain that the relationships of the Central American colony lie as near to the Antillean races as the general plumage coloration might lead one to infer.

In the assembled series of this species there is a slight difference in color between

the sexes, a point which apparently has not previously been noticed. Males have the pileum and hind neck darker and more slaty; females are browner in this respect, and with the dark area less extensive. These differences are rather noticeable in *gossii* and *hendersoni*, less so in *flaviventer* and *bangsi*.

Material is gratefully acknowledged from the Museum of Comparative Zoology and the United States National Museum. It is distributed as follows: *flaviventer*, Surinam, 2; *bangsi*, Colombia, 2; *gossii*, Cuba, 5, Jamaica, 8; *hendersoni*, Haiti, 3 including the type, Porto Rico, 1.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, June 30, 1934.*

Nests of the Townsend Solitaire.—While doing intensive field work for the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1931, I experienced the good fortune of finding four nests of the Townsend Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*). These nests were all located on the headwaters of Guernsey Creek, sixteen miles east of Mineral, California.

As I walked slowly up a gradual slope on a ridge covered with both sugar and yellow pine, a solitaire flushed from almost beneath my feet. It fluttered on the ground for about twenty-five feet and then slipped off without uttering any noise. I found the nest near-by on the ground and within an open "catface" or fire scar of a small yellow pine. It was protected by the tree on three sides. The nest was made of grass, with a diameter of about four inches. Three young birds in the nest were without feathers. This was on June 29. As we were passing over a large territory that day I was forced to leave the site without making further observations. The elevation was approximately 5100 feet.

The next day while climbing a cliff about 200 feet lower than the above-mentioned elevation I discovered a solitaire's nest in the crevice in the cliff. The nest was almost inaccessible without ropes. The crevice was about thirty feet above a steep talus slope that gradually tapered off, until it was replaced by a mixed conifer forest that was separated in the center of the valley by the main highway. The crevice was so difficult to reach that I could not ascertain whether there were eggs or young in the nest.

On July 17 I again found a solitaire's nest in a niche in a cliff that rose fifteen feet vertically from a talus slope that headed a small dry draw. The elevation was approximately 4650 feet. The bird slipped off the nest without a sound and flew, rather nervously but silently, from one tree branch to another. These perches always commanded a view of the face of the cliff and the nest.

My fourth solitaire's nest was in a very picturesque location. It was located on the ground under a boulder that formed a roof over it, the boulder being partly exposed on a steep slope. The nesting site was surrounded by firs and pines that towered silently above a spring which made the small canyon, surrounded by cliffs, a sight that would make the most calloused mountaineer want to linger a moment.

The nest was three and one-half inches in diameter, and constructed of pine needles. There were two young birds in the nest. They had brownish down and red bodies with a black stripe down the back. It took many hours of patient watching to locate this fourth nest. The silent solitaires, flying from branch to branch, watching me, an intruder, made the silence of the woods more silent, and left an impression that will long be remembered.—ARTHUR F. HALLORAN, *Berkeley, California, January 9, 1934.*

The American Knot in the San Francisco Bay Region.—The American Knot (*Calidris canutus rufus*) is a rather uncommon migrant in the San Francisco Bay area, particularly in the spring months. In general, it occurs in limited numbers or singly. It was a distinct surprise, therefore, to find Knots in numbers, this May, along the bay shore of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, California. Groups of from six to thirty individuals, aggregating about one hundred birds, were found along a mile of mud flat between Fleming and Isabel Points, from May 4 to 11, 1934. This region lies within the city limits of Albany, Alameda County, and El Cerrito, Contra Costa County.

The Knots flocked mainly in the company of Western Sandpipers (*Ereunetes mauri*), Red-backed Sandpipers (*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*), and Sanderlings (*Croce-*

thia alba). They were easily approached, and, on May 4 and 7, several examples were collected. Both sexes were represented. Most of the birds had attained practically full nuptial plumage. Two male specimens, however, were still in winter plumage, just beginning the prenuptial molt. Most of the birds observed in the field were in breeding plumage but several were noticed which still possessed the winter plumage.—JAMES STEVENSON and WILLIAM B. DAVIS, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, August 18, 1934.*

Group Vernacular Names.—May a newcomer who could not take part in the earlier discussions on vernacular names offer his views?

If we are to have an English name for every subspecies then Dr. Grinnell's suggestion (*Condor*, 36, 1934, pp. 165-166) is certainly well worth following. Descriptive or geographical names are far preferable to the present hodgepodge of meaningless personal names.

My experience, however, with beginners, leads me to believe that vernacular subspecific names are a complete nuisance, hindering progress, and causing endless confusion. Anyone who has tried to explain to a novice why the Texas Woodpecker in his old bird book is now called the Cactus Woodpecker, in southern Arizona, will appreciate the difficulties.

The beginner has no use for subspecies, whatever. They belong to the serious student of systematics and animal distribution, and in this type of research the scientific name is sufficient.

It is time that subspecific identifications be restricted to collected specimens. Basing identifications on the published ranges alone is always hazardous and never scientific.

Why not adopt group vernacular names for use in sight identifications? That is, all of the subspecies which collectively constitute a species would be known by one name. In the four examples of the Paridae given by Dr. Grinnell the beginner would have only the four group names to learn. Change of locality would not necessitate learning a new name for a bird indistinguishable from the one he already knows. We can eliminate approximately 600 useless names from the 1931 A. O. U. Check-list, by carrying out this plan.

I know this suggestion is not new, but, so far as I can find, the chief objection to group names is that we are not yet sure of the definition of a species, and further changes would occur as our knowledge advances. I believe, however, that the number of such doubtful cases is comparatively small and will soon be reduced to an insignificant figure.

This condensation into group names will give us a rational uniformity in nomenclature. Its simplicity will encourage the beginner in bird study, and our elusive subspecies will be left for those who are competent to handle them.—ANDERS H. ANDERSON, *Tucson, Arizona, August 24, 1934.*

Ten-year-old Passerines.—In the July, 1934, number of the *Condor*, p. 170, E. L. Sumner, Sr., in recording his ten-year-old Wren-tit, states that he "can find no other record of a passerine bird in a wild state living to this age." I have found records of seven such birds of five species as follows: male Purple Finch (*Carpodacus p. purpureus*) 10 years (Magee, *Bird-Banding*, 1, 1930, p. 191); two male Cardinals (*Richmondia c. cardinalis*) 10 years (Lincoln, *Fifty Years' Progress of American Ornithology*, 1933, pp. 86-87, and Ganier, *Wilson Bull.*, 45, 1934, p. 152); Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta c. cristata*) 12½ years (*Bird-Banding Notes*, 2, no. 10); Starling (*Sturnus v. vulgaris*) nearly 16 years (Jiršík, *Der Zug des auf dem Gebiet der czechoslovakischen Republik nistenden Stares Sturnus v. vulgaris*, Massarykova Akademie Práce, 1933); and Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*), the male at least 11 years old, the female at least 13 (Poncy, *Alauda*, 1932, pp. 398-406; also a letter). All of the above birds were banded except the crows, which, being permanent residents in the *Jardin des Anglais* at Geneva, were positively identified by injuries to their feet in 1924 and 1922 respectively. Fuller details as to all of these birds, except the Purple Finch, have been given in the April and July, 1934, numbers of *Bird-Banding* in the reviews on longevity.—MARGARET M. NICE, *Amherst, Massachusetts, September 1, 1934.*

The Siberian Rough-legged Hawk in Alaska.—The last edition of the A. O. U. Check-list gives only one form of the Rough-legged Hawk, *Buteo lagopus s.johannis*, as occurring in North America. However, while studying this species in connection with my work on the continuation of Ridgway's unfinished "Birds of North and Middle America," I found that the Siberian race *pallidus* has been collected at St. Michaels, Alaska. A male shot there by E. W. Nelson on September 16, 1879, is so much closer to Asiatic birds (*pallidus*) than to the American subspecies that I consider it to be *pallidus*; a female without definite locality other than "West Coast, Alaska," taken by J. W. Johnson, April 10, 1886, is intermediate in color between *s.johannis* and *pallidus*, but is large like the latter form; a male taken at St. Michaels by L. M. Turner, April 10, 1876, agrees in color with *s.johannis* but in size with *pallidus*. The race *pallidus* is larger than *s.johannis* and has the pale margins of the feathers of the upperparts lighter and broader than in the latter, especially in the young birds. The three Alaskan specimens mentioned above have wing lengths of 430, 434 mm. (males) and 447 mm. (female), as against 397-415 (average 407 mm.) in the males, and 395-438 (411 mm.) in the females of *s.johannis*.

A male from Kowak River, Alaska, kindly loaned me by Dr. Grinnell from the collection of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology (no. 32253) is small like *s.johannis* (wing 392 mm.) but is unusually pale for that form, suggesting an approach to *pallidus* in color. It is interesting to note in this connection that a specimen in the U. S. National Museum from Bering Island is large like *pallidus*, but is dark for its race, approaching *s.johannis*. These two, the St. Michaels bird collected by Turner, and the specimen taken by Johnson, suggest that in a region where the two races merge (as in the Bering Sea area) the size character remains more fixed than the coloration and is therefore a more reliable criterion.

The single specimen recorded from the Pribilof Islands is of the American form *s.johannis*, which is the race found throughout the Aleutian Islands as well.—HERBERT FRIEDMANN, U. S. National Museum, August 18, 1934.

The Anthony Green Heron Again in Northern Oregon.—In the Condor (30, 1928, p. 129) I recorded the occurrence of *Butorides virescens anthonyi* at Portland, Oregon, on the strength of a sight record. At that time, and until recently, no actual specimens had been preserved from any locality north of Mercer Lake, Lane County, Oregon.

Near my home in southeast Portland, well within the city limits and adjacent to the Willamette River, is a large undeveloped tract of "bottom land" that is overflowed to a depth of several feet each spring. During the rest of the year it is fed by several small springs which support a fair growth of tules and other swamp vegetation attractive to several species of ducks and swamp-loving birds. Several times my son has reported the presence of Green Herons in this area during the summer months. Near this swamp is the slow-moving Crystal Creek fed by large springs from Reed College Campus. On this creek is a commercial trout pond often visited by Blue Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons, and kingfishers that feed on the trout. The owner keeps several traps set for these visitors, and, on the morning of June 22, 1934, one of these traps held an Anthony Green Heron. My son was notified of the capture of this bird, which he soon secured. It proved to be an adult male in bright breeding plumage and with testes much enlarged. The specimen was preserved and is now no. 8510 in my collection and, so far as I know, constitutes the first actual specimen taken north of Lane County, Oregon.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, Portland, Oregon, August 14, 1934.

Through a Hospital Window.—From June 23 to November 4, 1933, I spent my days in Burnett Sanitarium, Fresno, California. Since that is the season of the year when the greatest number of birds are at Florence Lake, I spent no few hours bemoaning the fate that kept me away from our beloved mountains.

The window of my room framed but the tops of the trees in a garden across the street. And though I caught occasional glimpses of fluttering wings, I could not identify the birds. However, the third week I was in the hospital, I awakened with familiar bird songs ringing in my ears. For an instant I thought I must have dreamed them. But again I heard a meadowlark song and when I looked for it I saw only a Western Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*) perched on top of the cross arm of a telephone pole.

In quick succession this bird poured forth a volley of imitations. The Red-shafted Flicker, meadowlark, robin, Blue-fronted Jay, quail and Red-winged Blackbird, with a few notes in between that I did not know. As he sang he would hop two or three feet straight up into the air, as though the buoyancy of his renditions carried him off his perch.

For over a month the nurse knew when I was awake. When she heard the mocker, she came in to say good morning. To this day I am not sure whether this bird awakened me or awaited my waking to start his concert. But I rather suspect it was a case of coincidence in two habit forming creatures. On the stroke of six I awakened and quite likely that was the time allotted by the mocker, for mimicking the mountain birds.

I would see or hear this individual at other times of the day but only at six in the morning did it utter the notes, with which I am familiar.

Shortly after the mocker ceased his morning entertainments, I was allowed to spend part of the time in a wheeled chair. Then I was able to watch the happenings in the street. A line of cars was always parked in front of my window and the English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) became my source of amusement. Up and down, on the side walk in front of those parked cars, these busy little fellows hopped. The insects impaled on the radiators were the attraction. As all persons know, the newer radiators afford no support for bird feet and the sparrows knew this also. They hopped along, inspecting each radiator until they came to the old crisscross type. Then up they would jump to pick that radiator clean before searching for another. If a car drove into the line they had already looked over, they would fly back to see what it was like, before proceeding onward.

After all the easy ones had been gleaned they would fly up and "catch as catch can" from the vertical radiators. Or, if the line-up presented none of the older cars, they did not waste time bemoaning that fact, but merely went ahead and got whatever they could. It interested me greatly to see how they made use of their heads instead of expending unnecessary labor.—LILA M. LOFBERG, Florence Lake, Big Creek, California, May 2, 1934.

American Egrets at the Jornada Experimental Range, New Mexico.—Two migrating American Egrets (*Casmerodius albus egretta*) were observed at the Jornada Experimental Range near Las Cruces, New Mexico, on April 23, 1934. As this species is not listed in Mrs. F. M. Bailey's "Birds of New Mexico," this note is offered as a migration record. Since they probably are becoming more numerous as a result of protection, these rare birds doubtless have been observed previously by others within the state.

These American Egrets remained most of the day around the water tanks at the Headquarters of the Jornada Experimental Range, on a desert mesa about fifteen miles east of the Rio Grande, and attracted the attention of everyone at Headquarters. The distinguishing marks of the species, the white plumage, black legs and feet, yellow bill, and on one bird aigrette plumes, were clearly observed with prism binoculars of 8 diameter magnification at a distance of 125 feet. Pictures were taken at this distance also. The egrets stayed near the tanks with the cattle and were not easily frightened. When approached too closely by persons, they would fly to another tank a short distance away.

On the morning of October 16, five more egrets on their southward migration were seen at Road Tank, six miles northeast of Headquarters.

In order to be certain that these birds were not the smaller, Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), the writer examined a specimen of the latter species in the museum of the New Mexico State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Living Snowy Egrets also were seen at Picacho-Bosque on the Rio Grande near Las Cruces, where about twenty-five pairs nested this year.—ELBERT L. LITTLE, JR., Las Cruces, New Mexico, October 22, 1934.

The Golden Plover on the Beach at La Jolla.—On the morning of November 2, on the beach at La Jolla, San Diego County, California, we saw a bird that looked very much like the Black-bellied Plover and yet there was something odd, something different about its manner or its appearance that attracted our attention. As we

approached, the bird trotted ahead of us in true plover fashion, going toward the sea. Where the water slid up gently on the wet sand it mingled with a mixed company of godwits, willets, and Hudsonian Curlews. A racing dog put the whole flock to flight and we lost the stranger as the birds swept out over the sea.

On the afternoon of November 16 Mrs. Michael and I happened again to be on the same stretch of beach and again we saw the strange plover. This time when the bird took wing we discovered that it had a black tail instead of the white tail of the Black-bellied Plover and that there were no black patches under the wings. Now we were intrigued. And fortunately we had binoculars with us. The following notes were made while we had the bird under observation: A plover—first cousin to the Black-bellied—a trifle smaller and darker in general appearance. Black bill as short or possibly shorter than the Black-bellied, upper mandible slightly curved. Wears a dark crown patch set off by light eyebrows and a light area at the base of the bill which makes the crown patch appear as a little round cap. Looking straight toward one the face appears white, that is, a white area appears to surround the black bill. In certain lights there is faintly visible a dark ring around the neck which appears darker than the throat or chest. The chest is softly veiled with a speckled bib, slightly buff in color tone. The back is much darker and more distinctly speckled than the back of the Black-bellied Plover.

Even when this plover posed on the beach the tail was noticeably black and when on the wing the black tail was strikingly apparent. Also on the flying wing a light band shows. When standing motionless on the beach it has the hunch-shouldered, thoughtful attitude of the Black-bellied Plover, but if approached it shows a certain nervousness and in a quick, jerky movement up-bobs its head in the manner of a willet.

On November 17, we were back again for a visit with the Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*). We found it probing in the wet sand fifty feet back from the wash of the waves. We were able to get close enough to see that it probed with its mandibles held slightly apart and that it got a worm with almost every probe. The bird probed twenty or thirty times within the space of a square foot and in the course of two minutes we saw it capture and swallow nine worms. In probing it often sunk its bill down to the white forehead. Often it braced and tugged on the worm in the manner of a robin. During our two-hour visit with the plover we routed it from its feeding grounds three times. We would herd it down toward the sea until the waves forced it to fly. It would fly out over the sea and then a wide circle would bring it back to the original feeding site. All its probing was confined to a strip of beach ten feet wide and about one hundred and fifty feet long. This strip, that was literally pock-marked with probings, would be under water at high tide, but while we were with the plover the tide was out, and it foraged some distance back from the wave line where most of the other shore birds were feeding. A little company of five Killdeers constituted the only companions of the plover.

The Golden Plover probes for its food. The Black-bellied Plovers pick their food from the surface of the beach; we have never seen them probe. The Black-bellied Plover does not like to get its feet wet, the Golden Plover seems not to mind. Once while herding the Golden Plover down the beach we forced it into the feeding territory of the Black-bellied. The Black-bellied Plovers immediately proceeded to herd out the Golden. The birds trotted down the beach, the Golden retreating, the Black-bellies urging it on. Finally the Golden waded belly-deep into the water; the Black-bellies refused to follow.

While feeding on the beach the Golden Plover was absolutely silent, but twice when put to wing it uttered a call similar to the Killdeer's, but not so querulous.—CHAS. W. MICHAEL, Yosemite, California, June 4, 1934.

Ring-billed Gull from Barrow, Alaska—a Correction.—In a recent issue of the Condor (36, 1934, p. 169) Dr. L. B. Bishop and I made several addition to the list of birds of the Barrow Region, Arctic Alaska. *Larus delawarensis* should be withdrawn from the list, for the specimen (C. A. S. no. 6300) proves to be a second year *Larus canus brachyrhynchus*. I am indebted to Major Allan Brooks for calling attention to my misidentification.—ALFRED M. BAILEY, The Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois, September 17, 1934.

Townsend Solitaire Raises Two Broods.—Late in August, 1933, a nest of the Townsend Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) was located in the vicinity of Echo Lake, El Dorado County, California, with three newly hatched young. Because of the late date and the apparent immaturity of the young the writer felt reasonably sure that this was a second nesting.

This year (1934), although the above area was searched quite thoroughly, the solitaires were not noted. Another pair was located about a mile from this spot, however. On June 24 their nest was located on a small rocky ledge above a rushing waterfall. It contained four almost fully grown young. Another visit to this nest a week later disclosed the fact that the young had left, although they were still in the vicinity. The parents were observed attempting to teach their family to feed and care for themselves.

On July 13, while passing this region and less than fifty feet from the exact site of the first nest, a female solitaire was flushed from a relatively small nest on a rock shelf three feet above the then tiny stream. Upon examination it was found to contain three eggs, incubation under way. The nest, as usual, was constructed primarily of tamarack needles and twigs, and lined with grasses. It was perhaps smaller than average and more loosely and carelessly constructed.

There is no doubt in the writer's mind that this was a second nest of the same pair of birds, thus bearing out the conclusion reached in the summer of 1933 that the solitaire is another Sierran form which, at least occasionally if not generally, raises two broods in a season.—DUDLEY S. DEGROOT, *State College, San Jose, California, August 28, 1934.*

The San Jose Say Phoebe at San Diego, California.—On October 22, 1933, while I was collecting near Chula Vista, San Diego County, California, with J. C. LaForce, we obtained a Say Phoebe, which I made up. Recently, while working over the skins and cataloguing them for the collection, I was struck by the pale coloration of this bird. It was sent to George Willett for identification as a possible specimen of *Sayornis saya quiescens*. It has been identified by him as a typical specimen of the San Jose Phoebe. He states that, to the best of his knowledge, it is the first record of the bird on the Pacific slope of California, and suggested that this note be placed in the Condor.—IRA N. GABRIELSON, *Portland, Oregon, September 5, 1934.*

The Western Lark Sparrow and the Dwarf Cowbird.—There seem to be but few records of the Western Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*) being a victim of the Dwarf Cowbird (*Molothrus ater obscurus*). It was thus interesting for me to see a nest in a local orange grove on May 31, 1934, which had suffered from this pest. The nest had been located a couple of days earlier by Oscar Clark but had been deserted when I saw it, although it contained one perfectly fresh egg of each species.

Our fellow member, Mr. J. Stuart Rowley, has authorized me to state that he collected a set of five eggs of the Western Lark Sparrow with one egg of the Dwarf Cowbird on May 6, 1934, at Gorman, Los Angeles County, California.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, August 30, 1934.*

Singing of the Mountain Bluebird and the Western Bluebird.—Since my notes on the song of the Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) (Condor, 36, 1934, p. 164) were written, more interesting observations on the singing of this species have come to light. It may not be amiss to mention them here for the benefit of interested persons.

In the Murrelet for May, 1934 (pp. 49-50), appears a much more comprehensive description of the song of this species as noted at Great Falls, Montana, by Ellsworth Lumley, a careful observer. Mr. Lumley writes in part: "The song itself is comparatively simple, consisting chiefly of descending warbles, although occasionally a short ascending warble is given. The warbles invariably begin on the same note, and this note might be given singly before the warble." In a letter to the present writer, Mr. Lumley remarks that he also noticed the resemblance of the song to that of the Western Robin; and states that "to me the song is a distinct warble."

In a recent letter, Mr. Francis H. Allen informs me that he once heard the

Mountain Bluebird sing in the mountains of Colorado: "As I heard it on Long's Peak above timberline, September 25, 1919, it was 'a beautiful clear short warble, higher-pitched than that of *S. sialis* and hardly suggesting it.' I heard it once or twice after that during my stay at Long's Peak Inn."

The observations of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Ellison, made at Melrose, Montana, and communicated to me by letter, to the effect that a Mountain Bluebird sang so late in the morning as between 8:00 and 9:00, are interesting as indicating a possible individual or local variation in the hours of song on the part of this species. It may be well to add that during the past summer, my eighth consecutive season of observation on the song at Fortine, I again found the Mountain Bluebird to sing only during the early morning hours, before and soon after daylight. Mr. Lumley, in the article referred to above, tells of finding the birds at Great Falls to sing very early in the morning; all his observations were made in "total darkness."

The vocal accomplishments of the Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana occidentalis*) seem also to be little known. Early writers credit the species with a song, but their descriptions seem to be given scant credence by most present observers. Thus Dawson, in "The Birds of California" (p. 776), after quoting descriptions of the singing of the Western Bluebird by Townsend, Nuttall, and Cooper, and by the more recent writers, Lord and Mrs. Bailey, disposes of their statements in the following manner.

"... Someone has been dreaming!

"It is always interesting and sometimes amusing thus to trace the early struggles of truth. Preconceptions die hard. The Eastern Bluebird warbles delightfully; therefore, the Western Bluebird *ought* to—but it doesn't! In an experience of some thirty-nine years, the author has never heard from the Western Bluebird's beak an utterance which deserves the name of song, or anything more musical than the threefold *miu*."

To this it might be appropriate to reply that "truth crushed to earth will rise again." The fact that experienced observers in some localities find a species to be songless does not necessarily prove that other competent observers who describe the bird's singing have been "dreaming." It seems probable that, like its relative *S. currucoides*, the Western Bluebird in its powers of song shows individual or geographical variation.

Without attempting a description of the song of the Western Bluebird as a species, I would like to relate my observations on the singing of two male birds which with their mates nested in bird houses at my home near Fortine, Montana, during the past summer.

During previous years I had heard Western Bluebirds singing, but had paid no particular attention to details, not being aware that the species was classed as songless. During the summer of 1934, however, I frequently recorded the notes and songs of two male birds that nested on our farm. Throughout the season I slept at night between the two nests, 50 feet from one, 155 feet from the other, and often in the twilight hours of morning I listened to the singing of one or both of the males.

The first attempt at singing was noted at 4:40 a. m. (in full darkness) on April 19. For several minutes without pause one of the birds from a perch rendered an endless song consisting of the common call note, *few*, repeated over and over, regularly but with varying inflection. On succeeding mornings the notes gradually became more varied. The following description was jotted down on the morning of April 26: "Bluebird from perch began singing at 4:35 (quite dark), sang for about 40 minutes. Sang without pause for about fifteen minutes first; later snatches of song successively shorter, intervening pauses longer. Song a succession of call notes (3 different phrases); notes same as given separately in daytime, but connected in a series to form a typical 'song.' Song louder and more energetic than that of Mountain Bluebird, just as the call notes are louder and more vigorous. Tempo much like that of Robin's song. *F-féw, féw, f-féw, f-féw, eh-eh, féw, f-féw, eh-eh, féw, eh-eh, féw, f-féw* . . . The *eh-eh* is a common phrase given with the call note *few* (or *tew*) during the day. It resembles the short catch notes of Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Cassin Vireo."

Three days later, on April 29, I awoke in the darkness at 4:20 a. m. to find a bluebird already singing. I wrote down its song thus: "*Ic-ic té, téw, ic-ic téw,*

ic-ic towée, towée (often *two-lée, two-lée*—more musical), *ic-ic, téw, ic-ic towée, towée . . .* These songs, with minor variations, were given throughout the season.

As the days lengthened, the bluebirds began their morning singing at earlier hours, about two and one-half hours before sunrise, always well before daylight. At the time of the summer solstice, on the night of June 21-22, I remained awake until the first song was given, at 3:29 a. m., Mountain Standard Time. (As Fortine is less than 50 miles from the western border of the Mountain time zone, the corrected local time would be much earlier.) Generally the Western Bluebird was the second species to begin singing, being preceded only by the Tree Swallow, and being followed closely by the Mountain Bluebird. Singing usually continued for thirty to sixty minutes, but shorter series of song were sometimes given as late as 7 a. m. Frequently, but not regularly, the birds sang spasmodically during the twilight hours of evening. Singing ceased about July 15, soon after the second broods of young had hatched.

The singing of these birds resembled the usual song of the Western Robin even more closely than does the song of the Mountain Bluebird as observed in this locality. In the darkness I often found it difficult to tell whether a song was given by a Western Bluebird a few hundred feet away or by a Western Robin at a greater distance. To me the Western Bluebird's singing, from a musical standpoint, is less enjoyable than that of its quieter relative, the song of the Mountain Bluebird being softer, more subdued, and more pleasingly modulated.

During the early part of the season, in April, while the Western Bluebirds were pairing and selecting houses, the males during the day frequently gave a double note that was not heard later in the season. This was a musical *pa-wée*, much resembling a goldfinch's call. This was also coupled with the common call note to form a series of phrases which perhaps constituted a "mating song": *Pa-wée, few few. Few few fa-wée. Fa-wée. Few few fa-wée. Pa-wée. Pa-wée, few, few . . .* Another phrase sometimes given at this season I noted as *etherick tée*, the first double note resembling a common phrase of the Western Robin's song.—WINTON WEYDEMAYER, Fortine, Montana, September 4, 1934.

Another Cross-billed Blackbird.—In reading the Condor (35, 1933, p. 234) the note "A Cross-billed Blackbird", by E. A. Stoner, reminded me of a like experience which I had here at Florence Lake.

On September 26, 1926, I trapped a female Brewer Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) with crossed mandibles. It did not occur to me to sketch this deformity, but if I remember correctly the lower mandible was bent slightly to the left, the upper more sharply to the right. I do not recall a bluntness of either mandible or that there was any bump such as Mr. Stoner found on the upper mandible of the blackbird he sketched. In other words there was no abnormal feature other than the peculiar crossing of the bill.

So far as I could see, the bird was healthy and in good condition. After placing band number 258272, I released her. Shortly after this our Brewer Blackbirds migrated and though I watched especially for the cross-bill, the next and succeeding seasons, to my knowledge she never returned.—LILA M. LOFBERG, Florence Lake, Big Creek, California, April 23, 1934.

The New Mexico Race of Plain Titmouse.—Major Allan Brooks has placed at my disposal eight specimens of Plain Titmouse collected by himself in the vicinity of Silver City, New Mexico. These form the prime basis of the description now offered, of a new subspecies the existence of which has long been suspected by both Major Brooks and myself. The bird I select as type has been presented by him to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Baeolophus inornatus plumbescens, new subspecies. Lead-colored Plain Titmouse.

Type.—Male, no. 65010, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico; March 29, 1933; collected by Allan Brooks, orig. no. 7373.

Diagnosis.—As compared with *Baeolophus inornatus griseus*, from the eastern part of the Great Basin region, north of the Colorado River: similar in general fea-

tures, but bill smaller, especially shorter; tail shorter; coloration darker, more leaden hued, this tone most pronounced dorsally but pervading the lower parts also. Color of back, close to Deep Mouse Gray (of Ridgway, 1912, pl. LI).

Measurements.—Of type: Wing, 72.4 mm.; tail, 58.5; tarsus, 21.0; hind toe with claw, 13.7; culmen, 11.4; bill from nostril, 10.0; depth of bill at base, 5.4.

Geographic Range.—New Mexico (at least southwestern) and parts of Arizona south of the Colorado and Little Colorado rivers. Localities of the seventeen specimens examined, additional to typical series: Stanley, Graham Co., Ariz., collected by Alden H. Miller; Deadman Flat (6400 ft.), northeast base of San Francisco Mountain, Coconino Co., Ariz., collected by Harry S. Swarth. These latter specimens differ slightly in color tone from the Silver City series, but they are fall-collected and state of plumage may have something to do with this difference.

Remarks.—The racial features of "gray" titmouses from the Great Basin proper are being worked out by Dr. Jean M. Linsdale. The results of his studies will likely shed light upon the general relationships of the form now named.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, June 16, 1934.*

The Black-chinned Hummingbird in Oregon.—While collecting in the Warner Valley region of Lake County, Oregon, I obtained a female Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) in the MC ranch orchard near Adel post office, June 7, 1925. This specimen (orig. no. 1159) later passed into the hands of the late Donald R. Dickey. There appears to be no previous authentic record of this species from Oregon.—ALEX. WALKER, *Tillamook, Oregon, March 25, 1934.*

Winter Occurrences of Saw-whet Owl and Nuttall Woodpecker in Desert Areas.—Two unusual instances of winter distribution recently have come to my attention which involve departures of species from their customary zonal and associational surroundings.

Through Mr. E. L. Sumner, Sr., a mummified Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica acadica*) was submitted to me for identification. This bird was found by Miss Frances Carter at Twenty-nine Palms, San Bernardino County, California, January 29, 1934. It had been dead probably for several weeks when it arrived in Berkeley, February 5. The plumage of the dorsal surface and wings was in good condition. It is now preserved as a partial skin and complete skeleton (no. 63664, Mus. Vert. Zool.).

Hardly less surprising than the original known occurrence of this owl in the Colorado Desert (L. Miller, *Condor*, 34, 1932, p. 258) is this second record. It leads one to suspect that the species is not adverse to moving in winter from its breeding grounds in coniferous forests to the open desert. In Montana (Saunders, *Pacific Coast Avifauna* no. 14, 1921, p. 69) the Saw-whet has been found in winter in plains country at Miles City and "regularly at Kalispell." Mr. W. B. Davis tells me he has seen them frequently in winter in the sagebrush plains of the Snake River at Rupert, Idaho. The occurrence of the birds in the much more arid deserts of southern California is, however, a point of considerable interest.

On December 28, 1933, Dr. Loye Miller and I encountered Nuttall Woodpeckers (*Dryobates nuttallii*) in the cottonwoods and willows at Olancha on the west side of Owens Lake, Inyo County, California. This woodpecker has not been found before in Owens Valley and previously has been considered limited to the west-side drainage of the Sierra Nevada. Nuttall Woodpeckers break across the mountain divide to the south to follow the Mohave River on to the desert at Victorville (Grinnell, *Pac. Coast Avif.* no. 11, 1915, p. 79). The Sierra west of Owens Lake would seem to me to present a barrier of high zonal character not to be traversed by these woodpeckers. Likewise it is not clear how they might find their way along the desert face of the mountains, which are lacking in adequate stream-side cover, from Walker Pass, where they are known to breed, to Owens Valley. Since the species is non-migratory, one does not readily visualize these birds making long flights over treeless land to widely detached wintering grounds. It is not impossible that a breeding colony now exists in Owens Valley. Several individuals were seen by us at the Lake and three birds were collected, one of which is now no. 64505, Mus. Vert. Zool.—ALDEN H. MILLER, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, March 11, 1934.*

Mockingbird Nesting at Benicia, California.—Definite records of Western Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*) being seen here are rather few. A neighbor has informed me that she has seen them about her house occasionally in the fall or winter, and I have driven on two occasions past a bird which I was quite certain was of this species, but upon stopping and driving back to verify the record, the bird had flown away. On December 19, 1933, I made a positive observation of one on a telephone wire, whence it flew to a nearby tree on the Benicia Arsenal grounds.

On April 23, 1934, Mrs. Art Artus, who lives in Benicia, sent word for me to stop and see a nest with young birds in her yard, which nest she thought was that of a mockingbird, as the bird sang sweetly and resembled a picture in the single bird book which she had. Scout Naturalist Brighton C. Cain and Eagle Scout Dana Sperr, being my guests that day, we all dropped in at the location, and after examining the nest, one parent appeared with food, then the other, verifying the record which, so far as I know, is the first nesting record of the Mockingbird for the immediate north shores of the San Francisco Bay region. The nest was six feet up in the center of a small quince tree and was made of twigs, weed stems and several pieces and strips of cloth. The four young were probably a week old and were quite lively when removed from the nest, banded and photographed, the adult birds becoming quite excited over this procedure.

About noon on April 25, Mr. Artus found two of the young birds dead in the nest and the other two missing. I stopped in on the following day and found both parents in the yard, one with a red pepper berry in its bill, and we had hopes that the other two young were somewhere in the vicinity, possibly in the tall dry grass on the side of the house where they nested. [These hopes were verified when the parents were seen feeding both young in the trees near the house during several days afterwards.]

Mrs. Artus stated that she had fed strawberries to the adults and that she had seen them eating the fruit of the cactus in her yard.—EMERSON A. STONER, Benicia, California, April 30, 1934.

NOTES AND NEWS

The fourth "Ten Year Index to The Auk" appeared in August (our copy arrived on the 15th), 1934; it covers volumes 38 to 47, inclusive—1921 to 1930—and is paged i-xxiv, 1-328; typography and organization practically identical with those of the preceding Indexes. The Editor, Mr. Harry S. Swarth, was assisted by an able corps of collaborators, mostly Californians. Dr. T. S. Palmer, Dr. Herbert Friedmann, and Mr. Frank Bond, of Washington, D. C., also contributed importantly at certain stages toward the end of the tedious course of preparation. The useful "Biographical Index," in itself constituting 12 pages, was entirely the work of Dr. Palmer. The meticulous care for detail in literary matters, for which Mr. Swarth is so well known, ensured that high plane of accuracy which is in evidence throughout the book; and such accuracy is, of course, essential to the working value of any index. The fourth Auk index was published by the American Ornithologists' Union and copies may be had from the Union's Treasurer, W. L.

McAtee, at 200 Cedar Street, Cherrydale, Virginia; price \$3.00 paper, \$4.00 bound.—J. G.

We wish to call special attention of persons interested in conservation to the valuable article in the June, 1934, issue of the Wilson Bulletin (vol. XLVI, pp. 73-90), by Mr. E. R. Kalmbach. The title, "Field Observation in Economic Ornithology," indicates the theme of the article, which is to emphasize the essential value of the observational method as supplementary to the stomach-content-analysis method in determining the economic status of birds. Indeed, the point is made that the latter alone may not, for certain problems, suffice at all. Incidentally, Mr. Kalmbach, who is a member of the staff of the U. S. Biological Survey, makes some pertinent statements, well worthy of quotation far and wide, as follows: "Already there is a real and appealing need for extensive study in methods of preventing or reducing bird damage through means less drastic than wholesale destruction. There is missionary and experimental

work to be done, largely of the farm demonstration type, to meet certain situations in which the most practical and economical solution seems to be, not in attempts at bird control, but in the avoidance of damage by a well planned change in the crops being raised." This article should be read in its entirety in order to appreciate its full purport.—J. G.

MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

SOUTHERN DIVISION

JULY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Orni-

asked if any one knew the results of the Committee's meeting held in the East. Mr. Willett responded that it looked as though they had turned over to the gun clubs the remnants of the ducks and geese to be fed and then killed. In reply as to the advisability of sending in a protest, Mr. Willett told of the personal letters already sent to Washington by several members of the Cooper Club, enclosing a copy of the Resolutions on the Conservation of Ducks and Geese in California proposed by the Cooper Club, and protesting that the attitude of Mr. Foran, president of the Committee, was not the attitude of the conservationists, and stating that the



Fig. 45. Harold Michener, Member Board of Governors C. O. C., ex-president of Western Bird Banding Association.



Fig. 46. Josephine R. Michener, co-worker with Mr. Michener in studies of plumage and behavior.

thological Club was held at 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 31, 1934, at the Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, with twenty members and guests present. In the absence of President Abbott, the meeting was called to order by Vice-president Cowles and the minutes of the Southern Division for June were read and approved. Minutes of the Northern Division for June were read.

A letter from Mr. Harry B. Hawes, chairman of the Model Game and Fish Law Committee, was read and the Chair

California representative was the representative of the gun clubs and not of the conservationists.

Dr. Walter P. Taylor, of Tucson, Arizona, spoke briefly of birds noted on some of his Arizona trips. He stated that the long continued drought was gradually drying up water holes and marshes all over the southern area, and that overgrazing was doing away with the vegetation so necessary to the seed-eating birds. He spoke, also, of the very apparent interest now being shown by different individuals

in preparing for publication the records of Arizona's fauna.

Various field observations were given by members and the evening was spent in ornithological chatter interesting to those participating but difficult to record.

Adjourned.—LAURA B. LAW, *Secretary*.

AUGUST.—The regular monthly meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at 8:00 p. m., Tuesday, August 28, 1934, at the Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, with President Abbott in the Chair and forty members and guests present. Minutes of the Southern Division for July were read and approved. Minutes of the Northern Division for July were read.

Applications for membership were presented, as follows: Mr. Parker D. Trask, U. S. Geological Survey, Washington, D. C., by Roland C. Ross; Mrs. Harold Michener, 418 North Hudson Avenue, Pasadena, by Harold Michener; and Mr. James G. Paterson, 1961 Belamy Street, Santa Clara, by Gayle Pickwell.

The status of ducks and geese in the midwestern and western flight areas, if the shooting bill already signed by the President is passed, was again brought to the attention of the Southern Division by Mr. Willett. He outlined the purpose of a specially called joint meeting held in Los Angeles, August 17, at which representatives from seven well-known conservation organizations were present. At this meeting the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Whereas, the prolonged drought has destroyed a majority of migratory waterfowl nesting places, and

Whereas, a continued open shooting season would irreparably destroy breeding stock needed to protect waterfowl from extinction, therefore

Be it resolved, that the President of these United States be petitioned to proclaim a closed hunting or shooting season on all migratory waterfowl for the year 1934, at least for the Midwestern and Western flight areas.

This resolution was embodied in a letter addressed to President Roosevelt. A draft of the letter was to be circulated for approval among the various conservation organizations in southern California, and final action taken in early September when a second joint meeting was to be held. The content of the letter was read by Mr. Willett, and the motion made by him, that the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club add its endorsement of approval, was seconded by Mr. Laurence Peyton, and unanimously carried.

A live albino cowbird, uniformly gray in color, was exhibited by Mr. and Mrs. Michener. The bird had been captured in Pasadena and had been given to them.

Mr. Chambers reported a recent field observation made by Mr. Harvey Anderson of seven California Condors feeding on one dead sheep near Sandberg's.

The program of the evening, "Some Birds and Animals of Eaton Canyon," was presented by Dr. Spencer R. Atkinson. Dr. Atkinson spoke of the minimum effort expended in taking both day and night motion pictures at his home in Altadena, and of the interest and enjoyment his family had derived in watching the mannerisms and feeding habits of birds and of animals. The apparent fearlessness of one species for another was particularly noticeable. Birds and foxes ate together from the same small table; a family of raccoons and a family of ring-tails seemed to find pleasure in close association, and the ubiquitous *Mephitis* joined any and all groups. Various questions were answered regarding the sort of food used, the increase or decrease in wild life population, and the number of different species noted. At the close of the talk, President Abbott, on behalf of the Cooper Club members, extended thanks to Dr. Atkinson for the very entertaining evening.

Adjourned.—LAURA B. LAW, *Secretary*.

NORTHERN DIVISION

JULY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at 8:00 p. m., Thursday, July 26, 1934, in the Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, with President Pickwell in the Chair and about forty members and guests present. Minutes of the Northern Division for June were read and approved. Minutes of the Southern Division for June were read.

Notes from the field were as follows: Mr. John Arnold reported taking a set of fresh eggs of the LeConte Thrasher in June, near Coalinga; Mrs. Mead the successful rearing of three broods of Robins on Etna Street, Berkeley, and the continued welfare of the escaped Crow and Yellow-billed Magpie which are living at large in the same neighborhood; Mr. Cain upon a trip into the Sierra above Hetch-Hetchy, where eighty-three species of birds were seen between June 11 and 24. Species not noted in the region on previous trips were the Swainson Hawk,

Western Lark Sparrow and Bullock Oriole.

Dr. Pickwell, who spent part of June in the San Bernardino Mountains near Bear Lake, told of finding nests of the Eared Grebe on the pond weeds of the lake and nests of Horned Larks on the margin, the latter on the shore where the retreating waters had laid down a carpet of algal scum, which, becoming dried, created a belt of mimic desert. At the base of the mountains near a Fremont cottonwood oasis Dr. Pickwell saw all three of our California goatsuckers in the air at once; the Poorwill, the Texas Nighthawk and the Pacific Nighthawk.

The first paper of the evening was by John R. Arnold on "The Mockingbirds of three years ago show a continued widening of the area of occupation. No single bird was published in the Auk twenty-California." Mr. Arnold's continued observations and careful compilation of the records made by other students since a map showing the range of the Mocking-factor alone accounts for this, but three impelling causes are the increasing warmth and aridity of the climate, the changing agricultural conditions, and the increase in the numbers of berry-producing shrubs.

Mr. Lawrence V. Compton presented the second talk, "Nevada Birds," and spoke upon species seen at Mt. Rose, Walker Lake, Wheeler Peak and along the Colorado River during a field trip made in May and June this year. The last-named area proved to be the place of greatest attraction to the speaker because of the sharply contrasting adjacent areas of desert and riparian growth. Green Herons were on the river, Long-billed Marsh Wrens in the tules, Lucy Warblers and Least Vireos in the willow thickets, Blue Grosbeaks and Cooper Tanagers in the cottonwoods. At dawn the White-winged Dove counterfeited the call of a rooster. Mr. Compton's enviable experience was well portrayed.

Adjourned.—HILDA W. GRINNELL, Secretary.

AUGUST.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at 8:00 p. m., Thursday, August 23, 1934, in the Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, with about seventy members and guests present and Vice-president Miller in the Chair. Minutes of the Northern Division for July

were read and approved. Dr. Gerald F. Stoodley, 752 Santa Barbara Road, Berkeley, California, was proposed for membership by Mrs. Kenneth Saunders, and Mr. Charles W. Quintance, Estes Park, Colorado, by Mr. Charles T. Vorhies.

Mrs. Allen reported that the Nuttall Woodpecker seen by her in Strawberry Canyon last month is still to be found there. Mr. Alden Miller told of seeing Juncos on the Campus, so young that he judged their hatching date to have been about July 25. Mr. Taylor reported that he had just seen Valley Quail in Strawberry Canyon, only a few days old.

Miss Frances Carter told of a most interesting stay she had last winter at Twenty-nine Palms on the Mohave Desert, where water, shade and abundant grass drew to the oasis many birds not found on the adjacent desert. Among the eighty-seven species of birds seen only, or trapped and banded, by her, were the Say Phoebe, Black Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Vermillion Flycatcher, Western Flycatcher, Verdin, Western Marsh Wren, Western House Wren, LeConte Thrasher, Western Gnatcatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Phainopepla, ten species of warblers, Long-tailed Chat, Blue Grosbeak, English Sparrow, Pine Siskin, Oregon Junco, Lincoln Sparrow, Cinnamon Teal, American Merganser, Desert Quail, White-winged Dove, Poor-will, Texas Nighthawk and Western Belted Kingfisher. A reference to the close association in winter of Chipping Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings on the desert evoked the observation by Mr. Grinnell that these two species still maintain their comradeship in June, when they are to be found together on the fog-swept and bald-topped hills of Humboldt County.

The evening's program was an "Account of the Eighth Ornithological Congress at Oxford" by Mr. Alden H. Miller, delegate to the Congress from the Cooper Club and the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. Mr. Miller described the Oxford setting, touched briefly upon the contents of some of the papers, gave an account of the excursion to Whipsnede, and told of English birds. The Congress ended with an impressive sea trip on British destroyers to Pembrokeshire Islands in the Irish Sea. Three islands were visited. Among sea birds at home about the islands were Gannets, Puffins, Razor-billed Auks, Storm Petrels and Kittiwakes.

Adjourned.—HILDA W. GRINNELL, Secretary.

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Here are some ways in which every Cooper Club member can help us to maintain our standard:

1. Pay your dues promptly; our business year starts January 1, statements are mailed in December. We cannot plan the year's expenditures until we know about what our income will be. We do not go into debt for anything.

2. Get new members; we have lost membership for several years because of the hard times, but times are improving now, so help to build up the membership by bringing in your friends who are interested in birds.

3. Take out a Life Membership; by paying \$75.00 at one time you become a Life Member and pay no more dues. This money goes into the Endowment Fund, is invested in safe securities and only the interest is used, thus providing a permanent source of income.

4. Fill in the gaps in your CONDOR and Avifauna files while the prices are low. The present price list appears on the outside back cover of the July, 1934, issue of the CONDOR.

Here are some ways that you can help us to economize:

1. Notify us promptly of permanent change of address; Condors returned and remailed require extra postage.

2. Do not change your address for temporary absences, such as vacations. It costs money to make new stencils.

3. Members residing in California be sure to include the 2½ per cent State Sales Tax in your remittance. The Club will have to pay this if you do not.

4. Address communications to the proper officer as listed on the inside front cover of the CONDOR.

5. Make checks or money orders payable to the Cooper Ornithological Club, and have money orders drawn on Buena Park, California. The Post Office makes a charge for cashing orders drawn on another office.

By observing these simple rules you will reduce the cost of administering the affairs of the Club and thus make it possible for us to give you more in return for your dues.

THE BUSINESS MANAGERS OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB
November 15, 1934.

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